

Symptothermal Method 101

Everything you need to know to start charting

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Table of Contents

<u>Intruduction</u>	02
<u>I: What is the Symptothermal Method?</u>	03
<u>II: What do you need to start charting?</u>	06
<u>III: How to start?</u>	07
<u>V: Trust your body.</u>	08
<u>V: Resources & Bibliography.</u>	09

INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm your coach, Fernanda Abraham.

I am a fertility awareness teacher, certified with the FEMM organization. Around 7 years ago, my obsession with menstruation and fertility started, and now it's bigger than ever.

Realizing that I was 20 years old, and I was understanding my body for the first time, felt like I had been kept in the dark for far too long. However, the more I researched and got close to my body, my menstruation, and my cycle, the more empowered I felt.

This is what inspired me to start Revolución Cyclica; I wanted more women and people who menstruate to also feel the same way.



I truly believe that the true sexual revolution will only come with complete knowledge of our bodies and our cycle.

Fernanda Abraham

I

What is the Symptothermal Method?

The symptothermal method is one of many fertility awareness methods. With this method, you will learn to identify, understand, and interpret the different biomarkers of the body to differentiate between fertile and infertile days of our menstrual cycle.

Primary biomarkers:

- Cervical fluid
- Body Basal temperature

Secondary biomarkers:

- LH
- The Cervix

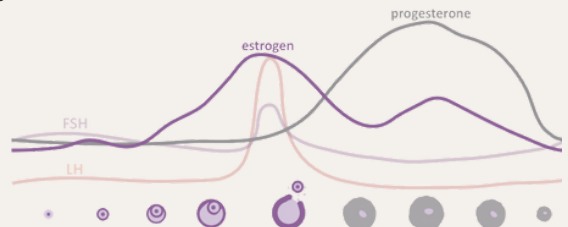
The hormones that come into play during the menstrual cycle are:

- Estrogen
- Progesterone
- LH
- FSH

Estrogen and Progesterone are produced in the ovaries and FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) and LH (luteinizing hormone) are produced in the brain. Therefore, the brain and the ovaries are in constant communication during the cycle.

Our cycle is divided in four phases:

- Menstruation (FSH)
- Follicular Phase (estrogen)
- Ovulation (peak estrogen +LH)
- Luteal Phase (progesterone)



Your mood, libido, and resistance change during each phase.

This hormone communication acts like a domino effect. It all starts with the FSH hormone signaling the ovaries to start producing Estrogen. The estrogen then will have an effect on the follicles making one of them grow and mature, when the estrogen peaks it will call back to the brain saying it is time to launch LH.

With the launch of LH, ovulation happens and the egg inside the follicle is released. That empty follicle will now produce progesterone till the end of the cycle.

The Pill and any type of hormonal birth control shuts down this communication between brain and ovaries. Which results in the complete suppression of the menstrual cycle, therefore when you are on hormonal birth control you do not have a real menstruation, because in order to menstruate you NEED to ovulate.

BIOMARKERS

Cervical fluid

Each month, thanks to the influence of sexual hormones Estrogen and Progesterone, the cervix will produce a fluid.

This fluid will affect the body in different ways. It helps to change the PH of the vagina, making it possible for sperm to survive inside (Fun fact: the vagina's PH is acid to protect us from bacteria, and at the same time it becomes an inhospitable place for sperm). It also becomes the perfect Airbnb and highway for the sperm to fertilize the egg. Did you know that sperm can survive inside of you for five days? (only when the cervical mucus is present).

With the Symptothermal Method, you learn to differentiate the types of cervical mucus that come with each cycle phase. Cervical mucus is our MOST important biomarker.

The cervical mucus will help us open and close the fertile window (the only fertile time of the cycle).

Body Basal temperature

The body basal temperature is the lowest temperature that our body reaches during rest. After ovulation happens the temperature will increase, therefore it is possible to differentiate the pre-ovulatory temperatures from the post-ovulatory temperatures which will then help us confirm ovulation.

Every morning you take your temperature, it is important to take it as the first thing you do.

It is important to note that ovulation can be confirmed, and we can estimate when it may happen, but we will never predict ovulation.

LH

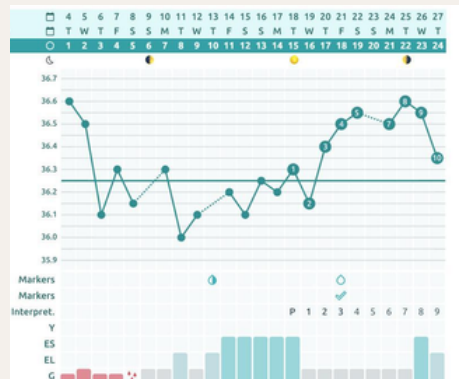
The LH is short for luteinizing hormone. This hormone will peak 24–36 hours before ovulation. To test the LH, we use test stripes in our urine to detect this peak.

LH will help us determine if ovulation is close to happening.

Cervix

As we saw with the cervical mucus, Estrogen, and Progesterone influence the cervix during the cycle. This influence does not only affect the cervix by producing cervical mucus, the cervical changes in openness, texture, and height in the vagina. Therefore, the cervix can help us determine the fertile window by noticing its changes.

During the fertile window, the cervix will sit higher in the vaginal canal, its texture will be soft like our lips and it will be open. On the contrary, during the non-fertile days, the cervix will be lower in the vaginal canal, the texture will be hard like the tip of our nose, and it will be closed.



This is how a Symptothermal Method chart looks like

ALL TOGETHER

So, we have our different biomarkers, and depending on what we see we will be able to identify at what point in our cycle we find ourselves and determine if we are fertile. It is important to note that we are only fertile for 24 hours a cycle, Yes, only one day per month! So, the idea of taking hormonal birth control every single day for only ONE day of fertility makes no sense.

As we already saw thanks to the cervical mucus the sperm can survive inside of us for 5 days, therefore if we add those 5 days to our 24 hours of fertility we get 6-7 days when a pregnancy is possible during the cycle. So, we could only get pregnant one of those 6-7 days per cycle! When I first discovered this I remember feeling so frustrated because my sex education had always been led by fear of pregnancy, the idea of an unwanted pregnancy possibility all month long was scary AF!

But now that I know better and with the help of the Symptothermal Method, I know exactly when a pregnancy is possible. With that, I can decide that if I want to be sexually active during my fertile window, I can rely on a barrier method like a condom.

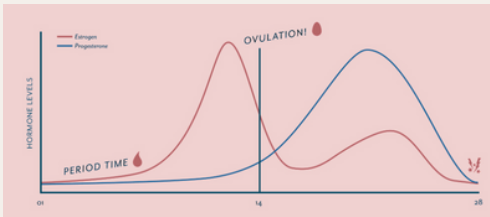
However, the fertile window can be an excellent opportunity to try different ways of sex and intimacy beyond PIV sex. For the rest of the month, and after following the rules of the method there is no possibility of a pregnancy, and you can have unprotected sex **without feeling scared**.

 It is important to remember that ONLY condoms will protect you from a STI.

LETS TALK ABOUT EFFECTIVNESS

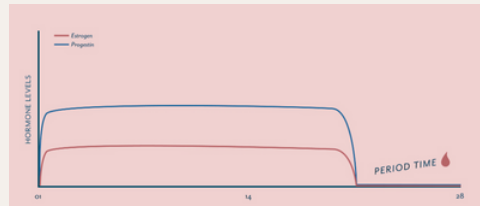
- The Symptothermal Method is considered **99.6%** effective (the same as contraceptive pills) with no side effects.
- No contraceptive method except abstinence is 100% effective.

However, it is important to note that this is a method that has a learning curve, and just like any other contraceptive method, it has its advantages and disadvantages.



Menstrual Cycle and the fluctuating hormones

Hormonal Birth Control suppresses the cycle



II

What do you need to start charting?

Charting the Symptothermal Method doesn't have to be expensive, you just need:

- Basal thermometer - it needs to be basal to measure the second decimal, which we need to be able to see those temperature changes.
- Pen and paper.
- A good resource to learn (see [Resources & Bibliography](#)).

You do not need to spend a crazy amount of money on a smart thermometer, you can buy the most basic thermometer and start charting.



SELF TAUGHT OR WITH AN INSTRUCTOR

Self-taught - for learning on your own I recommend you to look for a good resource and have some patience as it can take a little longer to understand the method.

- Pros - You go at your own pace and it is a cheaper option.
- Cons - All the information can be confusing, and you have no one to guide or answer your questions.

Learn with an instructor- to learn with an instructor, I recommend you ensure she is certified with an organization.

- Pros - You have a guide, someone who will answer your questions and give you confidence in your observations.
- Cons - Most times you won't be able to go at your pace as the dates of lessons will be established, and it is an investment.

I started learning with the book "Taking Charge of Your Fertility" by Toni Wechsler, which is a MUST when learning about Fertility awareness, however, I soon became frustrated because I felt there was A LOT of information and I felt lost. That gave me uncertainty and I didn't feel confident about my observations. In the end, I decided to invest in myself and my health and I took a wonderful course with a wonderful instructor it made the biggest difference, I felt guided and when the course was over I felt ready to chart on my own.

If you decide to start learning with an Instructor, I invite you to be a part of the course **CYCLE POWER**. In this 9-week course, you will learn the Symptothermal Method.

III

How to start?

You can start registering your cycle TODAY! You don't need to learn the Symptothermal Method to register your cycle.

By starting to register today, it may be easier to learn the method whenever you are ready to take the jump!

You will be more familiar with your cervical mucus, temperature fluctuation, and changes during your cycle.



1. Check your cervical mucus

You can start to get familiar with your cervical mucus, and register the characteristics that you see every day. You will start to see a pattern every month.

- Which color is the mucus?
- Does it stay on your finger or does it disappear fast?
- Can you stretch the mucus or it breaks?



2. Taking your temperature

You can start taking your temperature every morning and keeping a register.

- Take the temperature as soon as you wake up.
- Try to take it at the same time every day.
- You need to have at least 3 hours of deep sleep.



3. Register

You can start registering different physical and emotional changes that you notice with each phase of your cycle.

- Libido
- Emotions
- Exercise resistant
- Mood to be social
- and more.



Remember that registering your cycle is NOT the same as following the Symptothermal Method, which takes time to learn and has different rules. **Only registering your cycle CANNOT be used as Birth Control.**

IV

TRUST YOUR BODY

This method can become a journey to get to know your body and understand what is happening in your cycle.

It's about ceasing to live in the dark and bringing clarity to our hormonal health, which can help you make informed decisions about your fertility and overall health. Learning the Symptothermal method means knowing our bodies forever.

The Symptothermal method takes a few minutes per day to use correctly. At first, you may feel overwhelmed, but every day you will feel more confident about your observations and have a better understanding of your body. It is like learning how to drive, at the beginning you think you will never be able to pull it off, and then at one point you realize that you have been doing it almost automatic.

I would love to work with you on your journey to natural birth control and the complete knowledge of your cycle and body, join me for the course [Cycle Power](#)

If you do not feel ready to dive in the Symptothermal Method, but you still want to get closer to your cycle and learn more about it, then you can join the [Cyclical Living](#) workshop.



Resources & Bibliography

Here are my favorite resources for learning about our cycle and the Symptothermal Method.

- Taking Charge of Your Fertility – Toni Weschler

A bible when it comes to Fertility awareness methods. It is a complete book with wonderful information.

- Period Repair Manual – Lara Briden

This book is a great resource when it comes to periods. The way the book is divided makes it so easy to read. Definitely one of my favorite menstruation books.

- The Fifth Vital Sign – Lisa Hendrickson-Jack

It's a great book with amazing resources, I also recommend the podcast of Lisa Hendrickson-Jack.

- Natural & Safe: The Handbook – Sensiplan

If you want to start learning the Symptothermal method on your own, I recommend this book. You can also get the workbook. It is clear and concise. Perfect for your self-taught journey.

These resources are also the sources used for this e-book.

This E-book is the property of Revolución Cyclica.